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TAGS: [PREL](#) [KPKO](#) [UNSC](#) [XW](#) [SO](#) [UK](#)
SUBJECT: UK AND SOMALIA: CAUTIOUSLY SUPPORTIVE OF UN PKO
DEPLOYMENT

Classified By: Political Minister Counselor Maura Connelly for reasons
1.4 (b/d).

11. (C/NF) Summary. The UK is cautiously supportive of deploying a United Nations Peacekeeping Operation (PKO) in Somalia, when the conditions are right, FCO counterparts tell us. HMG sees clan leader buy-in of a UN presence and increased UN engagement, including moving the Political Office to Mogadishu, as key pre-conditions. Protecting the UN's peacekeeping reputation and being practical about force generation are critical concerns. The UK hopes to host the next Somalia Contact Group in September to "establish the critical path forward." End Summary.

Deploying a UN PKO, When Conditions Are Right

12. (C/NF) Describing UN Security Council Resolution 1814 on an integrated strategy for peace in Somalia as a "step in the right direction," FCO East Africa and Horn Section Team Leader Ben Lyon told us May 23 deployment of a UN peacekeeping force in Somalia is a UK government "policy priority," but only when the conditions are right. Lyon said the UK sees two key factors for determining the right time to deploy a UN PKO. First, the UN mission must have buy-in from the key clan leaders, demonstrating genuine acceptance of the UN mission and a shift in the current tribal rhetoric about the UN. Second, the UN must step up its engagement in Somalia, including more frequent, high-level visits and relocating the Political Office to Mogadishu. According to Lyon, "the Somali people need to think the UN is helping them." Lyon said that UNSCR 1814 would form the base of the UK's script on Somalia and that the UK would continue to advocate with Somali interlocutors that eventual deployment of a UN PKO would be a way to get Ethiopia out of Somalia.

Protecting the UN's Peacekeeping Reputation

13. (C/NF) FCO Peacekeeping Team Leader Nicola Murray called UNSCR 1814 "forward leaning," especially on deployment of a UN peacekeeping force. From her perspective it was important to protect the reputation of UN PKOs, which had been severely damaged by the difficulties with force generation for the United Nations - African Union Mission in Darfur (UNAMID). It was difficult to see a clear role for a UN PKO in Somalia as there is "no peace to keep," she said, and questioned how the UN would generate the force and what countries would volunteer troops. She was clear, however, that the UK will continue its financial support for the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM). Although HM Treasury has not yet determined final figures for the UK's contributions to peacekeeping operations for fiscal year 08/09, Murray thought UK funding for AMISOM would be on par with last year's funding. She also thought EU funding would be similar to

last year's levels.

¶4. (C/NF) Cabinet Office Africa Desk Officer Anna French said May 20 the UK hopes to convene the next Somalia Contact Group meeting in London in September. Although discussions about the agenda were still on-going, she thought it would largely be along the lines of the June 2007 meeting, a discussion "to establish the critical path forward."

Comment

¶5. (C/NF) While there is currently UK policy support for moving toward a UN PKO in Somalia, concerns about the practicalities of force generation may be a serious obstacle when it actually comes to mandating a deployment. The UK feels exposed, both internationally and domestically, because of the difficulties with UNAMID deployment in Darfur, and it will not want to put itself in a similar position with Somalia. Teeing up troop contributions and other practical support before concluding a UN PKO mandate on Somalia may alleviate concerns and facilitate UK support. End Comment.

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